



Messiah College  
**Mosaic**

---

Honors Projects and Presentations: Undergraduate

---

1-23-2008

## Homeschool Plus: "Pilot"

Matt Thornton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/honors>



Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

Permanent URL: <https://mosaic.messiah.edu/honors/286>

---

Sharpening Intellect | Deepening Christian Faith | Inspiring Action

Messiah College is a Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.

[www.Messiah.edu](http://www.Messiah.edu)

One College Avenue | Mechanicsburg PA 17055

Homeschool *Plus*

"Pilot"

by

Matt Thornton

Dept. of Communication  
Film Concentration

Fifth Draft

1/23/08

HOMESCHOOL PLUS

TEASER

INT. MILLER HOUSE - DAWN

A map of the world, with several pushpins stuck all over it. A small, 15 year old hand reaches up and pushes another plastic pin into Mongolia.

JOEL  
So how's the former Soviet Union?

DAD  
(on phone)  
We went out and shot some interviews with this church group today. Tomorrow, we're just shooting B-roll. Nothing too exciting, but the 700 club isn't going to make itself.

JOEL MILLER (15) is on the phone with his dad.

JOEL  
What time is it over there?

DAD  
7:45. We're heading out any time now to get dinner. We're gonna look for authentic Mongolian. Shouldn't be too hard to find in Mongolia.

JOEL  
Yeah. When are you coming home?

DAD  
(quoting)  
I don't know when, but we'll have a good time then, son....

Joel rolls his eyes at his dad's attempt at an in-joke.

JOEL  
(singing along)  
We're gonna have a good time then.  
Right, Dad.

Martha, his mother comes in the room. She points at her watch.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
Hey, we've got to head out now, too.

DAD  
Okay, have a good day. I miss you  
guys.

His dad sounds heartfelt. Joel seems to miss that.

JOEL  
Yeah, goodbye.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT MILLER'S VAN - MINUTES LATER

Martha drives Joel in the family minivan.

MARTHA  
Are you excited for school starting  
up again?

JOEL  
Not really.

MARTHA  
Don't you want to see all your  
friends again?

JOEL  
Like who?

MARTHA  
Like...Spencer? Don't you hang out  
with him a lot?

JOEL  
Yeah, but all we do is play chess  
and talk about World of Warcraft. I  
don't even play World of Warcraft.

MARTHA  
You're saying there's no-one at HSP  
you would consider your friend?

JOEL  
Mom, have you ever been to this  
place?

They turn a corner, and the CHURCH comes in to view.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRANT HOUSE

ALEX GRANT, (15 year old girl with a bright green skirt, lip  
piercing, and dyed black hair) leaves her front door and  
walks toward the car. It might not seem possible for one to  
emobdy defiance and counter-culturalism in this simple  
action, but Alex manages to do it.

And she's in a bad mood, to boot.

Her mother, JANICE GRANT (mid 30s, timid, kind hearted woman. One wonders how or why the two of these women ended up related) walks behind her. She tries in vain to cheer up her daughter.

JANICE  
I've heard that this place has a  
great music program.

ALEX  
(dripping sarcasm)  
Oh. Sounds wonderful.

JANICE  
(doesn't notice)  
You always wanted to play the  
piano, right? If we can find time,  
I think we can afford for you to  
take lessons here.

ALEX  
Swell idea, mom.

JANICE  
I think you'll really like this  
place, Alex.

Alex opens the car door, and stops right before getting in.

ALEX  
I said I'd go. I didn't say I'd  
like it.

Martha's face falls. She gets in the car with her daughter.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

...after a while:

JANICE  
You'll have to learn to like it,  
Alex. There aren't very many  
options left.

Alex nods. She knows she's not a good kid, looking at her  
mom, she can't say that she deserves it.

ALEX  
Yeah.

Her mom drives off.

CUT TO:

## INT. LYNCH HOUSE

DANA LYNCH (15, a complete knockout, and looks like she's accidentally wandered from Laguna Beach or the O.C. into this show.) stands in front of a mirror wearing a skirt that is far too short--it's above her knees.

Her mother, NANCY LYNCH (late 50s, speaks in a southern drawl that makes one think she was probably a Scarlett O'Hara back in her day) looks on behind her, disapprovingly.

NANCY

(after a while)

No.

Dana stomps off to change her too-hot-for homeschooling attire.

DANA

Oh come on!

NANCY

Absolutely not.

CUT TO:

## EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Millers pull into the church parking lot. A large sign in the lawn says "Tallwood Baptist Church".

Joel's mom acts as if she's giving him a briefing for a high-priority, classified mission.

MARTHA

I want you to go straight to Study Hall, Joel.

JOEL

Okay, mom.

MARTHA

And sit quietly and read your History. No talking to Spencer.

JOEL

Don't worry mom, I'm a good kid.

## INT. CHURCH LOBBY

Joel enters a too-small hallway that serves as a lobby, carrying a backpack jammed full of too-many books. A large "Homeschool Plus" sign hangs on the wall. The "plus" is in a larger, more playful font, perhaps Comic Sans or Papyrus.

He turns the corner and comes face-to-face with SPENCER BECKETT (14).

JOEL  
Hey Spencer.

SPENCER  
Chess today?

JOEL  
Well, invariably, yes.

CUT TO CREDITS

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

## INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL

In the large fellowship hall, which serves as the Study Hall, cafeteria, concert space, etc. A small population of homeschoolers ranging in age from 4 to 16 hustle and bustle to get to their assigned classes on time.

The room is set up simply: fold-up tables, a window to the church kitchen on one wall, and a small stage complete with stand-up piano and shiny "JESUS IS LORD" banner.

Standing in the midst of the fray is the STUDY HALL MONITOR, Mrs. Olsen. She's at her tiny desk, trying to goad her small children into quietly do their schoolwork.

The camera pans from the scene over to a table with Joel and Spencer, who are setting up a chess board. It's a Lord of the Rings chess set, with ornately carved busts of Gandalf the Grey, several Uruk-Hai, and all four Hobbits.

Spencer is nearing the end of a World of Warcraft story.

SPENCER

...And I was drawing so much aggro  
cause of my Greataxe, It was almost  
an hour until someone rezzed me.

Spencer is a wiry imp with huge glasses, and a voice that's just the right amount of nasality so that it's almost not annoying at all, you just feel bad for the kid.

Almost.

JOEL

(pretending to care)

Wow...

SPENCER

Yeah, I mean you'd think someone  
would remember a Soulstone...

He shakes his head at how obvious all of it is. Joel has no idea what the hell he's talking about.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Oh, Did you hear about Vincent and  
Dana?

JOEL

No, what happened?

SPENCER

They're kinda going out now.



JOEL  
That's interesting. Last I saw they  
were fighting in the hallway.

SPENCER  
Really? About what?

JOEL  
(sighs)  
...The doctrine of election.

SPENCER  
(rolls eyes)  
Again?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

VINCENT BECKETT (16) and Dana argue while walking down the hallway. Dana we already know, and Vincent is the resident Sk8ter Boi.

Both are very quick and animated, as if the fate of the universe rests on this conversation.

DANA  
Okay, it's like this, we're in a  
rowboat, we're drowning, and God  
takes our hand and pulls us out.

VINCENT  
And the 5 billion other rowboats?

DANA  
What?

VINCENT  
The 5 billion other people in the  
world! Why didn't he pull them out?  
What made him decide that we were  
worthy and they weren't?

They go in a door.

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vincent and Dana go into a darkly lit room. The kind of room that a couple would go in to make out, if they weren't homeschoolers.

DANA  
Who can know the mind of God?

VINCENT  
That's such a cop out, though...

Dana grabs him by the shirt, and starts kissing him.

He's surprised at first, but doesn't fight it by any means.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
(takes a breath)  
...and that verse isn't even in  
context.

They kiss again. In between kisses, they talk...

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
You know, I don't think we're  
supposed to be back here.

DANA  
Yeah, we're not. In case you've  
forgotten, My mom is the program  
director. What's she gonna do to  
us?

VINCENT  
Well, I could think of a couple  
things...

DANA  
I don't think you really care, do  
you?

VINCENT  
(sarcastic)  
If I did, it wouldn't matter, God  
decided it all beforehand, right?

DANA  
(still kissing)  
I hate heretics like you.

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL

Joel and Spencer are playing chess, as before. The commotion  
of people coming and going still buzzes, but it's slowly  
dying.

JOEL  
I thought your parents didn't let  
you guys date.

SPENCER  
Well, yeah. Technically they aren't  
"dating", but--

JOEL

Sorry, you'll have to explain to me sometime how your brother can "go out" with someone and not "date" them.

SPENCER

Well, they like each other.

JOEL

That's not the same thing.

SPENCER

Sure it is.

JOEL

No it's not. When you date someone you just...I dunno. You do more. You go out on dates and stuff.

SPENCER

How would you know?

JOEL

(rolls eyes)

Well no, I wouldn't.

SPENCER

Exactly, so shut your mouth. The fact of the matter is, there aren't that many girls here to begin with, and my older brother just took one of the most dateable girls around.

MRS. OLSEN

Okay!

The middle aged MRS. OLSEN stands from her desk, and shouts a formal Hear-Ye announcement aimed at the entire room. She's got a sense of humor about it all, and says it as if they haven't heard the same thing a million times.

MRS. OLSEN (CONT'D)

It's now 8:00, which means quiet study hall. That means you read, you do schoolwork...

She looks right at Joel and Spencer

MRS. OLSEN (CONT'D)

...You play chess, whatever. Just shut up while you do it, okay?

The kids all speak in unison.

EVERYONE

Yes, Mrs. Olsen.

MRS. OLSEN  
I don't want to have to tell you  
guys again.

She reads her book again, and is bothered by her young child next to her desk. He asks for help with his homework.

Joel studies the board, thinks about his first move of the game. He reaches for a Hobbit on the board.

SPENCER  
(about Joel's chess move)  
You don't want to do that.

Joel looks up.

JOEL  
Wait, really?

As Joel studies the board again, the camera moves across the hall to...

ALEX'S TABLE

Alex sits in study hall, reading a book, and listening to her iPod. MARK REED (dyed black hair, and a too-tight Hot Topic T-shirt) comes over apathetically and sits next to her.

She looks up, and sees the pre-packaged punk in front of her. She is not impressed.

He doesn't notice, and nods at her, trying to pretend he's not trying nearly as hard as he is. He doesn't actually do a bad job at it -- he looks like he doesn't care about life at all.

It's shattered the moment he speaks.

MARK  
What are you listening to?

ALEX  
(not looking up)  
Really? That's the first thing you  
ask me?

MARK  
What?

ALEX  
What kind of music I like? There's  
a lot more to me than what kind of  
music I listen to.

MARK  
Well yeah, I mean obviously...  
(nervous laugh)  
(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)  
...I know that, I was just  
wondering...

ALEX  
Don't think for a second that just  
because I come from public school  
and I have a lip-ring, that I'm  
easy. There is a lot going on in  
here, and frankly I don't think you  
really want to deal with any of it.

MARK  
Okay, okay, I'm sorry.

He sits there in awkward silence. She feels a little bad, but  
not too bad. The kind of bad you feel when you spray a puppy  
with water after he pees the carpet.

ALEX  
It's the Velvet Underground. Do you  
know them?

MARK  
(lying)  
Oh yeah. They're great. Do you like  
Relient K?

She laughs - he must be joking.

She looks at him, and No, He should be joking, but he isn't.

ALEX  
Umm. No. I don't.  
(pause)  
I'm Alex.

MARK  
Mark.

MRS. OLSEN  
And I'm Kathy...

They jump, and realize that Mrs. Olsen has appeared over  
them, seemingly out of nowhere.

ALEX  
God! Where did you come from?

MRS. OLSEN  
(not answering)  
You're new, so you might not have  
noticed when I said it ten seconds  
ago, but this is quiet study hall.  
That means headphones on, books  
open.

ALEX  
Yeah, okay.

She returns to her book. Mrs. Olsen looks at MARK, who slinks away into his book as well.

Mrs. Olsen walks back to her station.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLS

Martha Miller (Joel's Mom) walks down the halls with Janice (Alex's Mom). They pass identical twin girls both wearing denim dresses and long hair reaching past their rear-ends. Janice eyes them as Martha talks.

MARTHA  
We had a training session with all the new hall monitors a week or so ago, but since you're just starting now, I'll give you the rundown.

JANICE  
I imagine it can't be that complicated. I mean, I...monitor halls, right?

MARTHA  
You'd be surprised.

They come to a desk at the corner of a Hallway. Martha hands her a clipboard like it's her government-issue handgun.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
The basic gist is this: If someone's walking around without a hall pass, write them up. If they're dressed inappropriately, write them up. If they're just goofing off in the hall, especially if they're damaging property, write them up.

Janice is trying to absorb the information Martha is barraging her with.

JANICE  
Should I...write this down?

Martha gives her a xeroxed and stapled-together document marked "handbook."

MARTHA

It's all in the handbook. When in doubt, just ask the student where they're supposed to be, and use your own judgement. You should be fine.

Janice sits down at the desk. She must look confused and out-of-place, because Martha asks:

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Are you okay? Any questions I can answer?

JANICE

I'm just still trying to get a feel for this whole "homeschooling mom" thing. I never in a million years thought I'd be making lesson plans, shuttling Alex around to classes, and working part-time all at once...it's a lot to handle.

MARTHA

(nods)

It can be pretty overwhelming at first. But trust me, it gets easier.

Janice nods, trying to take the comfort in the way it's intended, and not the patronizing way it sounds.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

In fact...I've got something that might help you.

JANICE

Vicodin?

MARTHA

No, just a book with a lot of practical advice for homeschooling teenagers. Helped me a lot when I started with my oldest. Come by my class sometime, I'll let you borrow it.

JANICE

Oh, thanks, but You don't have to...

Martha starts to leave before Janice finishes

MARTHA

Don't mention it. If you run into anything you can't handle, just let me know, okay?

Martha smiles, and walks back to the office, leaving Janice sitting with her fully locked-and-loaded clipboard.

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL

Joel and Spencer sit at the quiet study table, like before, playing chess.

Joel, however is much more interested in Alex than the game. Specifically the way her skirt flops as she taps her converses to the music in her headphones.

JOEL  
Do you know who the new girl is?

SPENCER  
Who?

He turns around, a complete 180.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
Green skirt?

JOEL  
(embarrassed)  
Yeah, and I want to thank you for  
the incredibly subtle way you did  
that just now.

Alex looks up at Spencer, who immediately turns back around to the chess game. He tries to pretend like she didn't just totally see him staring at her.

SPENCER  
Never seen her before. Why?

JOEL  
Just curious.  
(moves a piece)  
Check.

Spencer looks at Joel, not the chess board.

SPENCER  
You like her, don't you?

JOEL  
What? No, I don't even know her.

SPENCER  
(still smiling)  
But you think she's cute...

Joel rolls his eyes. Spencer's attempts at matchmaking are never something to get excited about.



JOEL  
Are you gonna move?

Spencer looks at the board, not noticing that Joel is looking back at Alex.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
...I just like her skirt, that's all.

SPENCER  
Yeah, it's very...green.

He moves a piece.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
You should tell her you like it.

JOEL  
I can't do that.

SPENCER  
Why not?

JOEL  
I just...can't. That's not the way you do things. I can't just go up to her and say "hey, I really like your skirt"...

SPENCER  
Why not?

JOEL  
(laughs, shakes head)  
That's just...not what you do, Spencer.

He moves Gimli the Dwarf and takes a Black Rider.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
And it's your turn.

Joel glances over at Alex, and almost as a response, the camera moves across the hall to:

ALEX'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Alex is listening to music, and reading, in an attempt to keep quiet.

Mark taps her on her shoulder.

ALEX  
(pulling out headphones)  
What?

MARK  
(whispering)  
Hey, I was just wondering: Where'd  
you get your piercing done?

ALEX  
I did it myself.

MARK  
(a little too in awe)  
Wow, badass.

ALEX  
(annoyed at the attention)  
Yeah, I know. I'm just so  
rebellious. The only reason I did  
it was to make my mother cry. I'm  
kind of a bitch, really.

Mark doesn't pick up on the sarcasm.

MARK  
Yeah...when I'm 18, I'm gonna get a  
bridge on my ear, a stud in my  
eyebrow, and double nose-rings.

ALEX  
Why don't you just put a huge spike  
through your torso? Then you'll be  
sure to get a lot of attention.

MARK  
Huh?

ALEX  
Really, I just mutilate myself  
because I like the way it looks. My  
mom doesn't care.

MARK  
Oh.

ALEX  
But hey, if you want to tear holes  
in your body out of some weird  
Oedipal complex, go right ahead.

Mrs. Olsen coughs loudly from her desk.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
(to Mrs. Olsen)  
Yeah, don't worry, we're good.

Alex puts her headphones back in, and goes back to her book.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Janice is at her hall monitor desk, reading the latest issue of Home Gardening Monthly.

She looks up from her desk, to see ZACK REED (13) riding an outdoor BMX bike through the halls of homeschooler-rented Church. And if there's anything wrong with that, he seems completely oblivious to it.

Janice is at a loss...

JANICE  
Umm...excuse me?

Zack looks up at her and stops.

ZACK  
Yeah?

JANICE  
Where are you supposed to be?

ZACK  
(matter-of-factly)  
I'm going to Study Hall.

JANICE  
Okay...but...the bike?

ZACK  
My mom said I could bring it today.  
You can't do anything to me. I have  
a hall pass.

He holds up the card around his neck.

Janice's not sure what to do. So, it being her first day, she does what she knows probably shouldn't.

JANICE  
Well, okay. Just be...careful.

She sits back down at her desk, thoroughly confused.

Right at that moment, Nancy Lynch (Dana's mom, program director) turns the corner and almost runs into Zack.

NANCY  
Good God, what is going on?

Janice jumps.

JANICE  
Oh, he has a hall pass...

Zack tries to ride past her, but she stops him.

NANCY  
(to Zack)  
What on earth are you doing?

ZACK  
I'm going to study hall.

NANCY  
(to Janice)  
Are you writing him up?

JANICE  
Well I was, but...he has a hall  
pass...

Beat.

NANCY  
He's riding a bike.

ZACK  
I can't do that?

NANCY  
Of course you can't do that!

ZACK  
But no-one said I couldn't. Is  
there a rule that specifically says  
I can't ride a bike through the  
hallway?

NANCY  
Does it matter?

JANICE  
(pointing at the bike)  
Well, apparently it does...

NANCY  
I'm sorry, what is your name?

JANICE  
I'm...Janice. Janice Grant.

NANCY  
Janice, I'm not going to argue with  
you. Take this boy to the office  
right now and call his parents.  
This is unacceptable.

Janice gets up, and starts taking him to the office. He gets  
off the bike, and starts walking it...

ZACK  
Oh, come on.

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL

Alex looks across the hall, at Joel. He immediately looks away, as if...was he staring at her?

She pulls out one headphone. Joel must be afraid he'll turn into a pillar of salt because he is steadfastly looking at the chess board, and not in her direction.

She leans over to Mark, who is drawing ornate Sharpie designs on his arm.

ALEX  
(whisper)  
Hey, was that kid staring at me?

Mark doesn't look up.

MARK  
What kid?

ALEX  
That kid over there. The one  
playing chess.

Mark looks up. Almost on cue, the camera moves back across the room to:

JOEL'S TABLE

Joel and Spencer sit at quiet study table, like before, playing chess. Joel still studies the board, pretending that he hasn't noticed the attention from Alex.

SPENCER  
You're going to lose.

JOEL  
You say that every time.

SPENCER  
Who wins every time?

He looks at Joel assuredly through his thick glasses.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
You've got two, maybe three moves  
left.

Joel looks even more intently at the board.

JOEL  
What? How?

As he studies the board, he doesn't notice that Alex has gotten up and walked over to their table.

ALEX  
(abrasively)  
Is there something you want to say to me?

They both jump when she talks.

JOEL  
I...what?

ALEX  
You've been staring at me for the past hour.

JOEL  
I have?

Joel is genuinely surprised. Was he that obvious? Has it been that long?

ALEX  
Yeah. You have.

Spencer and Joel both look at her, speechless. Alex towers above them.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Well?

Spencer pipes up.

SPENCER  
...Well, go on, Joel. Tell her.

JOEL  
Spencer!

ALEX  
Tell me what?

SPENCER  
He likes your skirt.

Alex thinks he's being sarcastic.

ALEX  
(to Joel)  
Oh, you got a problem with it?

JOEL  
No, no I...like it a lot. It's  
very...different.

Alex looks at the two of them quizzically.

ALEX  
(cautious)  
Thanks...

JOEL  
It's a compliment.

SPENCER  
He just means to say that there  
aren't very many dateable girls  
around here.

Joel glares at Spencer. He wants to yell at him, he wants to kill him--or possibly himself. But he keeps it inside due to the fact that a pretty girl is standing right next to him.

Instead, he looks up at Alex, praying she doesn't take it the wrong way...

She smiles back, not sure what she thinks of them yet.

ALEX  
(smiling)  
Thanks...I think.

She notices their Lord of the Rings chess set.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Nice chess set.

SPENCER  
(nervous laughter)  
Thanks.

ALEX  
You somehow found a way to make  
chess even nerdier.

JOEL  
(unconfident)  
You should see his Battlestar  
Galactica set...

Alex laughs. Real, genuine laughter. It's not a huge belly laugh by any means, but it's a laugh. At Joel's joke. He smiles. It's a *moment*.

A moment that's shattered by...

MRS. OLSEN  
(shouting from her desk)  
Excuse me! Do you guys want to go  
the office?

Joel and spencer look petrified. Alex shrugs.

ALEX  
Don't worry, I'm just leaving.  
(to Joel, smirking)  
Have fun with your game.

She walks off back to her table. After a while, when Joel  
feels he can safely attack Spencer...

JOEL  
(whisper)  
What was that?!

Spencer smiles like the imp he is, and just looks at the  
board, not saying anything.

JOEL (CONT'D)  
What?

SPENCER  
It's your move.

END OF ACT ONE



ACT TWO

INT. CLASSROOM

"THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION" is written on the board. MRS. REED'S hand reaches in from out of screen and underlines the word THEORY.

MRS. REED  
Evolution is the theory that the world is billions and billions of years old, and Man has "evolved" to where he is today from lower life forms...like monkeys.

The kids in the class - including Alex, Joel, Spencer and Dana chuckle. Alex sits in the back, but she doesn't seem to find it very funny.

MRS. REED (CONT'D)  
The fact is that the evidence for the theory is nowhere near as conclusive as some would make us believe. Intelligent Design works just as well as Darwin's theory for explaining the evidence.

Dana, sitting near the front (of course) raises her hand. She seems ready to bring to public attention some piece of information of which they were heretofore unaware.

MRS. REED (CONT'D)  
Dana?

DANA  
And isn't it true that Darwin become a Christian and recanted his theory on his deathbed?

Alex laughs quietly, and mutters something underneath her breath.

MRS. REED  
Alex?

Everyone turns to see the new girl. Alex wishes she could disappear.

MRS. REED (CONT'D)  
Do you have something to say?

ALEX  
That's just...one of the dumbest things I've ever heard.

Dana is shocked that someone actually believes in evolution, and offended that this person said she was dumb.

DANA  
Excuse me?

Joel and Spencer look at each other: she's pissing off Dana.  
They already like her.

MRS. REED  
Okay, let's keep it civil, here...

ALEX  
And, I'm sorry, but if God is God,  
couldn't he decide to use  
evolution? Why does it have to  
be one or the other?

Mrs. Reed tries to salvage the situation as a teaching  
moment.

MARTHA  
There are some people who try to  
reconcile Evolution and the Bible.  
What are some problems that they  
might run into with that?

Spencer raises his hand.

SPENCER  
The Bible says that God created the  
heavens and the earth in 6 days.

ALEX  
Yeah, the Bible also says that men  
can own slaves and marry four  
wives, so take your pick.

Spencer's mouth hangs open. Alex feels the class turning  
against her.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Look all I'm saying is: Why does it  
matter? Shouldn't you just believe  
no matter what other people say?  
Isn't that what makes it faith?

Mrs. Reed nods, she has no idea how she's going to salvage  
this class. So she tries to pretend that nothing happened.

MRS. REED  
Right...and if you turn to page 25,  
you'll see how the lack of a fossil  
record...

Spencer leans to Joel, while the teacher continues preaching.

SPENCER  
(whispering)  
Wow.  
(MORE)

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
(looks at Joel)  
She's crazy, man.

JOEL  
She's not crazy.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Janice sits at her Hall monitor desk, reading her magazine, she glances up momentarily.

KRISTOPHER REED, 8, turns a corner, and walks down the hall. His eyes dart around, he looks very self-conscious.

They make eye contact, and his eyes dart away.

JANICE  
(warmly)  
Hello.

Kristopher mumbles something in return.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Where are you supposed to be?

He stops, and sighs heavily. He speaks in a little kid Eeyore-like drawl.

KRISTOPHER  
My trumpet lesson.

JANICE  
Why aren't you there?

He sighs heavily again.

KRISTOPHER  
I lost my trumpet.

JANICE  
(genuinely)  
Well, where do you think it could be?

He looks down at the case in his hands.

KRISTOPHER  
I don't know...

JANICE  
How long has it been missing?

KRISTOPHER  
I don't know...

Right at that moment, Martha (Joel's mom, Hall monitor trainer) turns the corner and almost runs into Kristopher. As soon as she sees him, her face falls in disapproval.

MARTHA

Oh goodness...Kristopher, what are you doing?

Kristopher starts to frantically make excuses to Martha.

KRISTOPHER

I'm sorry, Mrs. Miller. Please, please, don't write me up. My trumpet...

She knows his trumpet isn't missing.

MARTHA

Let me guess...it's still "missing?"

Kristopher is on the verge of tears.

KRISTOPHER

Please, Mrs. Miller. I've already gone to the office twice this year. If I get written up one more time, my mom is gonna skin me alive.

JANICE

Twice? Why?

Kristopher is quiet.

MARTHA

He keeps missing his trumpet lesson, because he "lost his trumpet." Right, Kristopher?

KRISTOPHER

(quiet)  
Yes...

MARTHA

And where was it each time?

KRISTOPHER

...in Mom's car.

JANICE

Oh...

Martha starts to take him away to the office.

MARTHA

Well, why don't we check in the office, and see if your mom knows where it is.

Kristopher weeps quietly.

Janice sits at the desk, not knowing what to think. She returns to her magazine, not seeming to approve at all.

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL

Mrs. Olsen stands from her desk. Her hands are up in mock defeat. Her job is over now, they can do what they want.

MRS. OLSEN

Okay, Lunchtime! I give up, you can talk now.

The study hall erupts in a bustle of activity.

Vincent and Dana walk through the doors into the study hall, already in their conversation. Vincent is perturbed.

VINCENT

But that destroys all human responsibility. We're not robots, Dana.

DANA

How do you know we're not robots? Maybe we are, and this issue of choice is just an illusion. Would you be able to tell?

VINCENT

(increasingly annoyed)  
No, I...Can we stop, please?

DANA

(shakes head)  
I think the only reason you hold on to the idea of free will is your own pride.

VINCENT

(hurt)  
My pride? We're making this about me now, then.

DANA

I'm not. You're the one who wants his will to be stronger than God.

Vincent stops.

VINCENT  
You really are making this into an issue.

Dana turns and stops as well.

DANA  
It already is an issue, Vince. I'm just choosing to deal with it.

VINCENT  
But do we really have to deal with it? We'll live our lives the same either way. It doesn't make any difference.

DANA  
Are you serious? It makes all the difference.

VINCENT  
Okay, fine. I'm just...really tired of arguing about it, Okay? Can we go?

He tries to take her by the arm, but she won't have any of it and shakes her arm free.

DANA  
No. We can't.

VINCENT  
Dana...

DANA  
I guess Truth is just more important to me than it is to you.

VINCENT  
What is that supposed to mean?

Dana turns and walks away, leaving him speechless.

Just at that moment, Spencer and Joel burst through the double-doors.

SPENCER  
(yelling to his brother)  
Hey dude! Over here!

The word "dude" has never been more awkward or out-of-place than when it comes out of Spencer's mouth.

VINCENT  
What is it, Spence?

SPENCER  
Joel's in love with a crazy girl.

VINCENT  
(to Joel)  
Join the club.

JOEL  
(shakes head)  
I'm not in love, and she's not crazy!

SPENCER  
Look, I'm not trying to be mean or anything, but seriously. If you were left to yourself, you'd be single for the rest of your life.

JOEL  
In case you've forgotten, my parents aren't exactly in love with the idea of...me being in love.

He walks off.

SPENCER  
Where are you going?

JOEL  
(annoyed)  
I'm going...to get some lunch.

CUT TO:

OVER BY THE LUNCH LINE

Joel stands in front of about five kids in the lunch line, which formed in front of a small window to the church kitchen. He has a few dollars in his hand.

Alex comes up behind him.

ALEX  
Hey, chess boy.

Joel turns around, He didn't realize she was there. Is his hair okay?

JOEL  
Oh...hey.

ALEX  
Anything else you want to compliment me on?

Joel laughs nervously, and turns back around.

JOEL  
 Heh, no. I think I embarrassed  
 myself enough with the last one.

ALEX  
 (surprised)  
 You're embarrassed? Why? This is an  
 awesome skirt.

Joel laughs.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 I've got a lip ring, too. It's  
 already gotten some positive  
 feedback so far.

Joel chuckles awkwardly. He takes a while deciding to say his  
 next words. They're very important, and represent a great  
 deal of effort for him.

JOEL  
 (turning back around)  
 I'm Joel, by the way.

She passes over the introductions, much more interested in  
 the Xeroxed menu sheet by the kitchen.

ALEX  
 I'm Alex. Don't they have anything  
 without...meat?

Joel looks at the menu.

JOEL  
 What, are you Catholic?

Alex takes pause. Did he really just ask that?

ALEX  
 It's not lent. And No, I'm vegan.

He breathes an audible sigh of relief.

JOEL  
 Oh, you just...don't eat meat.

ALEX  
 Or dairy. It's not that I'm in love  
 with cows or chickens or anything.  
 But you wouldn't touch them either  
 if you saw what they did to it.

Joel's never thought about that.

JOEL  
 (earnestly)  
 What do they do to it?



ALEX

I saw this video once of a chicken farm, and they were just sending the baby chicks down the conveyor, and if there was one that was just not big enough, they just...threw it in the trash.

JOEL

Oh..

ALEX

By the time they threw them away, they were already dead from suffocation.

Extremely awkward pause.

ALEX (CONT'D)

So, am I gonna eat with you and your chess friends, then?

JOEL

Umm, yeah, why not?

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Dana de-stresses her day to Vincent. Spencer sits nearby, but if she notices him, she's sure doing a great job of hiding it.

DANA

...My car is broken, so I had to drive to HSP with my Mom - that was a fun experience, let me tell you - and now that we're here, she won't let me take the car to leave. She says "I'm not covered on the insurance." I'm like, then why don't you put me on the insurance?

She shakes her head.

DANA (CONT'D)

God, I can't stand her sometimes.

VINCENT

(not very sympathetic)

Hey, you're not the only one.

Joel and Alex approach the table,

JOEL

Everybody, this is Alex.

Alex does a little wave.

ALEX  
Hello.

She sits down.

Spencer looks at Joel and smiles. Joel shoots him a signature "shut-up-or-I-kill-you" look.

SPENCER  
Hey. Spencer.

Alex nods and takes a bite of her apple.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
So...you used to go to public school?

While chewing, she answers:

ALEX  
(cautiously)  
Yeah.

VINCENT  
Did you like it there?

ALEX  
(shrugs)  
No. I mean, it was school, right?  
You're not really supposed to like it.

DANA  
...Yeah, I guess.  
(delicately...like a mack truck)  
So, Alex, I'm curious...What do you believe about the Doctrine of Election?

Bad idea.

Everyone (except Alex) starts talking at once.

JOEL	VINCENT
Do we <u>really</u> have to do this again?	Oh, come on, Dana...

DANA (CONT'D)	SPENCER
What? I was just curious as to what her views were...	Yeah, I don't see why we can't have a rational discussion about this...

This goes on for a while, until Alex shouts out.

ALEX  
Wait, stop!

Everyone gets quiet.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
What the hell are you guys yelling  
about?

SPENCER  
Predestination.

ALEX  
What?

DANA  
You know what predestination is,  
right?

Alex looks at Spencer, with an attitude.

ALEX  
It's not really something people  
fought about at my old school.

JOEL  
Believe me, you're better off not  
knowing.

ALEX  
What? What is it?

VINCENT  
(sighs, explains)  
It's the belief that God decided  
who goes to heaven before they're  
born.

ALEX  
...that's retarded. Who the hell  
would believe that?

Joel lowers his eyes. He can feel the wrath of Dana's  
Calvinism burning behind him.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I mean, that's not fair, why would  
God mess around in what we want to  
do with our lives? Wouldn't he  
rather just let us choose for  
ourselves what we wanna do?

Dana is shocked and offended by her...for the second time  
today.

Everyone starts yelling all at once. Again.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BATHROOM

Joel is at a urinal, his back strategically facing the camera. Spencer's voice comes from a stall.

JOEL

Well, that was one of the most awkward lunches of my life.

SPENCER

You know that everyone else is in band next period, right? It's gonna be you and her in study hall together. Alone.

JOEL

I thought you said she was "crazy".

Joel finishes, zips up his pants, and goes to wash his hands.

SPENCER

Well yeah, but maybe she's not...bad crazy.

JOEL

(nodding)

Oh, she's good crazy.

Spencer's done, and joins him at the sink.

SPENCER

I'm telling you man, you're in - you just need to seal the deal.

Joel gets annoyed at him.

JOEL

"Seal the deal?" What are you even talking about? You've never had a girl like you in your entire life - everything you know you learned from your older brother

SPENCER

(suddenly insecure)

Hey now, there's no need to get all personal. And so what if I learned from Vincent, he's the one with a girlfriend...

JOEL

Well, from the way he and Dana went off I'm not sure how much longer you'll be able to say that...

He laughs. It's a joke to them.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM

It's not a joke to Vincent and Dana. They pace in the back room again. They are not making out this time - in fact, they seem to be doing the exact opposite.

VINCENT

You can't be serious. This is not a big deal.

DANA

How can you say that? Can't you see? We're too different. We can't agree on anything.

VINCENT

We agree on virtually everything.

DANA

Like what?

VINCENT

We both hate Liberals...

DANA

Vince, everyone hates Liberals.

Vincent concedes the point.

VINCENT

Okay, fair.

She looks away, trying to hide the tears forming in her eyes.

DANA

I knew this would never work.

VINCENT

What?

DANA

This relationship. I knew I could never go out with an Armenian.

VINCENT

Dana, Armenians are from Armenia! Arminians agree with the free will theology of Jacobus Arminius.

DANA

Whatever.

VINCENT

I just don't think we have to believe the exact same thing about everything.

DANA

That's the problem. I do.

VINCENT

This is something we can work through.

DANA

Think about it, Vince. How long can a relationship last when one person wants to know the Truth, and the other just thinks it "doesn't make any difference."

She turns away from him, and walks toward the door.

VINCENT

Are you...breaking up with me?

She stops at the door.

DANA

We're not going to agree, Vince.  
We're never going to agree.

Vincent doesn't have a reply. As she leaves, she says:

DANA (CONT'D)

And besides...it's not like we were even "dating" to begin with.

Vincent is alone.

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL

Joel sits at the piano in the Fellowship hall, playing "Fred Jones, pt. 2" by Ben Folds. He's lost in the music, and not playing it for anyone but himself.

And indeed, there's barely anyone else in the hall.

Alex comes up to the piano, clearly impressed.

ALEX

Wow, that's really good.

Joel stops.

JOEL

Oh, hey.

ALEX  
No, keep going. I want to listen.

He doesn't say anything, for fear of being awkward. He just goes back to playing.

She closes her eyes and listens. She's clearly in awe of something he really doesn't find all that amazing.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Man, I love music. I can't imagine life without it.

JOEL  
(still playing)  
Yeah. Do you play?

ALEX  
Well, I took lessons, and got technically good I guess. But every time I try to play it...it just doesn't turn out right.

JOEL  
You're in choir, right?

ALEX  
Yeah, but like I said, it doesn't turn out right. Not like this.

JOEL  
This? This is nothing.

ALEX  
Yeah, right.

Joel shrugs as he finishes the song.

JOEL  
You play something.

ALEX  
Oh no. I couldn't.

JOEL  
You took lessons, now play something.

He gets up from the bench, to let her sit down.

ALEX  
(sitting down)  
I took lessons, but it's all technical knowledge.

JOEL  
Try me.



Alex smiles at him.

ALEX

Okay...

She launches into a technical Beethoven piece, making every single mistake you possibly can. It's bad. It's 5th-grade recital bad.

JOEL

Wow.

ALEX

What?

JOEL

You weren't kidding.

ALEX

Shut up!

She hits him, laughing. Joel laughs, much less nervous than before.

CUT TO:

INT. SANCTUARY

MR. CLEMONS, the Band director, holds his baton in his hand, as he directs them in one final piece. Vincent glances at Dana, who's playing the trumpet across the way from her.

She averts her eyes, and looks up at Mr. Clemons.

They finish, and Mr. Clemons glances at his watch.

MR. CLEMONS

Okay, let's run through the woodwinds once more...

Vincent pipes up.

VINCENT

Excuse me, can I go to the bathroom?

MR. CLEMONS

Just don't take up residence.

Vincent laughs politely with everyone else, but as he gets up, his face turns to stone.

CUT TO:

## INT. HALLWAY

Janice looks at her clipboard. It has the two names of the kids she's written up today. She looks away. She's not very happy with herself.

She shrugs, not understanding, and returns to her book.

Across the hall, a tear-eyed Vincent exits a classroom, turns around and slumps against the wall next to the door. He's crying.

Janice looks at him, completely devastated.

She looks down at the clipboard, pen in hand. Then at him, crying in the hallway. She has to decide if she'll do what she's supposed to do and write him up, or...

She hesitates for a moment, then...

...sets down the pen. She looks around, makes sure no-one's watching, and quietly, slowly, walks over to him.

JANICE

(kindly)

Where are you supposed to be?

Vincent notices her for the first time. He knows he can't hide the tears in his eyes, but he tries anyway.

VINCENT

(embarrassed)

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see you there.

JANICE

It's okay...

Vincent looks up and down the hall.

VINCENT

I guess you have to write me up, now don't you?

JANICE

What?

VINCENT

I don't have a hall pass, and I'm in the hall by myself, you're supposed to write me up?

Janice considers for a moment.

JANICE

...No.  
(a beat)  
Not really.

She sits down with him on the floor.

JANICE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

He snuffles. She pulls a pouch of kleenex from her purse. He laughs, and takes them.

VINCENT

(feels stupid)  
I...It's...a girl.

She nods, understanding.

JANICE

Oh, okay. Come over here, tell me about it.

They walk back to her desk as he starts to tell her about it.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CHURCH

Joel and Alex leave through the double doors into the outside, wearing cards that read "OUTSIDE HALL PASS" around their necks.

ALEX

I can't believe we have to wear these stupid things around our necks just to go outside. I feel like I'm a convict or something.

JOEL

They just want to keep track of where we are, that's all.

ALEX

That's exactly what I'm talking about! Doesn't that bother you?

JOEL

(shrugs)  
No, why would it?

We follow them to see what's back there: a wooden playground, a dilapidated basketball hoop, and a soccer-sized field of grass.

ALEX

They just want to keep tabs on you at all times. It's like the Patriot Act.

JOEL

It's not like we're really inconvenienced, we just had to write our names in a book and wear tags.

ALEX

(sighs)

It's the principle of the thing.

JOEL

What principle?

ALEX

I dunno, rules just get under my skin, you know?

JOEL

(smiles)

Umm...no, I don't know. Sorry.

ALEX

I just never got why we had to follow them. Like...jaywalking. Why can't I walk across the street on a red light?

JOEL

You could get hit by a car.

ALEX

Might. Exactly. Shouldn't it be up to me whether I want to take that risk or not? Or...clothes. Why do we need to wear them?

JOEL

(nervous laughter)

Then...then everyone would just be running around naked.

ALEX

Yeah, so what? Why shouldn't we be running around naked? It's freaking hot out here anyway...

She grabs her hoodie, and starts to pull it over her head. Joel gets flustered...he's not used to this.

She pulls it over, revealing her nearly-bare spaghetti-strapped shoulders.

Over by the door, a Hall Monitor named MRS. MCCARTHY notices with wide eyes the skimpiness of her straps...

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. I'll leave the rest  
on.

Joel gulps.

JOEL  
Right.

MRS. MCCARTHY  
Excuse me...

Alex turns around, suprised.

ALEX  
Hello?

MRS. MCCARTHY, the no-nonsense outside monitor stands imposingly over her.

MRS. MCCARTHY  
Come here.

She takes her aside.

MRS. MCCARTHY (CONT'D)  
I'm going to have to ask you to  
change.

ALEX  
What?

MRS. MCCARTHY  
Your clothes. Spaghetti straps are  
against Dress code.

ALEX  
What?

The woman holds up three tightly held fingers.

MRS. MCCARTHY  
Three fingers, that's the rule.

She puts the three fingers on Alex's strap. It is much too  
small.

ALEX  
You're kidding me...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. WOODEN PLAYGROUND

JOEL

You got off pretty easy. She didn't  
write you up.

Alex wears her hoodie again, and looks mighty pissed about  
that.

JOEL (CONT'D)

And she didn't even mention your  
lip-ring.

ALEX

If you're trying make me feel  
better, it's not really working.

JOEL

Sorry.

ALEX

No, I'm sorry. I can be kind of a  
bitch sometimes, and you don't  
deserve that. It's just...I'm not  
sure if you noticed, but I don't  
really fit in around here.

JOEL

Yeah, I know what you mean.

ALEX

What are you talking about? You  
have a ton of friends.

JOEL

Yeah, but...I've never had any sort  
of real relationship with any of  
them.

ALEX

(smiles)

Not even your chess buddy?

JOEL

(laughs)

Well, we play chess, and talk about  
Sci-Fi shows sometimes, but that's  
about it. It's hard to have any  
real connection with someone when  
you can't talk to them for half the  
day, and then you only see them  
twice a week.

ALEX

Huh, yeah.

There's a pause in the conversation.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Well, just so you know..."real"  
relationships aren't what they're  
cracked up to be?

JOEL  
Yeah? What do you mean?

Alex smiles.

ALEX  
Let's not talk about it. You wanna  
play basketball?

JOEL  
Sure.

They get up, and go over to the slide.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Janice sits at her desk with Vincent, who seems to be talking  
freely now.

JANICE  
It's both. And it's neither. We  
have to have free will otherwise,  
our actions have no meaning. But it  
has to be predetermined, because  
otherwise, God doesn't have any  
real power.

VINCENT  
But...How can God have a real  
relationship with us if we have no  
choice?

JANICE  
My husband, bless his soul, would  
always say that with things like  
this...there's no easy answer.

VINCENT  
But it...doesn't make sense.

JANICE  
No, it doesn't. But that doesn't  
mean it's not true.

Vincent ponders a while.

VINCENT  
But what do I do about Dana?

JANICE  
Oh man, don't ask me that. Theology  
is easy compared to relationships.  
Do you talk to your parents about  
it?

VINCENT  
Oh gosh, no. If my mom ever knew I  
even liked a girl, she'd freak.

JANICE  
Really? What, does she expect you  
to like boys?

A beat. Vincent laughs, he feels a little better.

Right at that moment, NANCY walks by. She passes the desk at  
first, then turns.

NANCY  
What are you doing, Vincent?  
Shouldn't you be in Band?

VINCENT  
Well, yes, but...

NANCY  
(to Janice)  
Does he have a hall pass?

JANICE  
No, I was just...

NANCY  
You know the rule, Janice. Write  
him up.

And with that, she speed-walks on past them.

Janice looks at Vincent.

JANICE  
I think you should go back to your  
class now.

VINCENT  
Yeah.

He gets up, and quietly tiptoes back to his classroom.

JANICE  
And Vincent...

He turns.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Don't worry about Dana...



Around the corner, we see Nancy stop. Did she hear Dana's name? She bends her ear to hear what Janice is saying.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Every couple has issues like that  
at the beginning. It's nothing to  
worry about.

He nods, and goes back into his class.

Nancy has a look in her eyes. A look of deviousness.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT

SWISH! A basketball goes through the net.

JOEL  
So you're dealing with  
homeschoolers, you've got to  
downgrade everything one level.

Alex, in hoodie, and Joel shoot the basketball around. They seem to be getting along better and better.

ALEX  
(laughing)  
Wait, so...

JOEL  
So when two homeschoolers make out,  
it's about on par with two public  
schoolers having sex.

ALEX  
So what would making out  
be...Holding hands?

JOEL  
(laughing along)  
I guess so. Also, most kids don't  
date here.

ALEX  
Yeah, what's the deal with that?

JOEL  
We've "kissed it goodbye." Or our  
parents have for us, at least.

Alex catches the ball, and holds it.

ALEX  
Man, that's just what I'm talking  
about. How can you stand all of  
this crap?

JOEL  
What crap?

Alex holds up three fingers.

ALEX  
This crap. Three fingers? Kissing  
dating goodbye? Why do you put up  
with all of these...rules? It all  
seems so arbitrary.

JOEL  
I...dunno.

ALEX  
I mean, doesn't it just boil your  
skin how they want to control your  
every thought? Don't you just want  
to break free and be...bad  
sometimes?

Joel thinks very intently. Has he?

JOEL  
I guess so...yeah. But, it wouldn't  
change anything. What would be the  
point?

ALEX  
The point? There's no point. If  
there's a point to it then you've  
missed the whole point. I'm just  
talking good, old fashioned teenage  
rebellion.

JOEL  
Well, I don't know. Maybe we could  
use some of that.

ALEX  
Yeah...maybe it could.

She has an idea. She shoots the ball.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Come on.

She grabs him by the arm and leaves, as the ball bounces on  
the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. FELLOWSHIP HALL - MINUTES LATER

Alex leads Joel by the hand to the center of the Study Hall.

ALEX  
You ready?

Joel has never felt this mixture of excitement and fear before.

JOEL  
Ready for what?

Before he can do anything, she pulls off her hoodie again, and throws it on the floor. She grabs him by the neck, and starts kissing him.

In the middle of Study Hall. With tongue and everything.

Everyone stops. People are flabbergasted. But Joel doesn't notice--

He's in heaven.

NANCY  
That's enough!

Suddenly, it stops. Someone pulled them apart. Joel looks to who it is...

It's NANCY LYNCH, standing over them in all her burning, southern fury.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
(stern, forceful)  
I'd like to see you two in my office.

Alex smirks at Joel, and follows after Nancy.

Joel wants to enjoy himself...

But he knows he's just made a huge mistake. He runs after Nancy and Alex.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. OFFICE

Nancy Lynch sits at her desk in a too-small office. Cramped in the seats in front of her are Alex and Joel. Nancy speaks in her even southern drawl.

NANCY

I don't know what things were like at Oscar Smith High School, but here at HSP we do NOT allow students to engage in public sexual activity.

ALEX

"public sexual activity?!" Come on, it was...

Nancy cuts her off.

NANCY

This program exists to create an environment where parents feel safe to leave their children. They want to know that they'll be at a place free from drugs, foul language, and premarital sex.

(pause)

Now, that's all destroyed when two students start *necking* in the middle of a crowded study hall.

Alex doesn't say anything.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Now, I wonder what kind of person would do something like that. I have a certain type in mind - let me know if I start to get it wrong. I imagine a...public school student. Well versed in sexual activity.

Joel looks at Alex. Her face is stone - She's not denying anything.

NANCY (CONT'D)

One would assume the only reason she's here at all was because she was thrown out of her previous school. For what, who can say? Bad grades? Gang-related violence? Illegal drug use?

ALEX

It was just pot.

Joel's eyes get huge. Nancy smiles coldly.

NANCY  
And it landed you here, didn't it?  
(pause)  
We are a welcoming place, Miss  
Grant. But we are only welcoming  
provided you play by our rules.  
Learn them.

Alex is quiet.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
That's it. You can be sure your  
mother will learn of this...

She shuffles out. Nancy turns to Joel.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Don't worry about this too much,  
Joel. I know you're a good kid.

Joel nods, his eyes trained to the floor.

JOEL  
Yes, ma'am.

NANCY  
You've never acted up, or even  
shown any hint of rebellion. I'm  
sure you had nothing to do with  
this.

Nancy lets her words sink in for a few moments.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
This is not who you are, Joel.  
Don't be tempted by the ways of the  
world. You know where they lead...

JOEL  
Yes ma'am.

NANCY  
Just be careful about the company  
you keep.

JOEL  
Yes ma'am. Is that all?

NANCY  
I suppose so...

He gets up and follows Alex out into the hallway...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Alex is right there, excited about their little adventure

ALEX  
Man, wasn't that a rush?

Joel is quieter, thiniking

JOEL  
Yeah...

ALEX  
I mean, did you see the look on her face? She was terrified that two kids kissing in her Study Hall would bring her little kingdom to the ground.

Joel is quiet.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
What's the matter?

She turns around, but before she has a chance to say anything...

He kisses her.

She pushes him away.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Hey now, don't get too excited.

Joel's spirits fall.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, I didn't want you to get the wrong idea. That kiss...It didn't mean anything.

Joel tries to write it off as if nothing happened.

JOEL  
Right. Sorry, I know. You hate rules. I just...needed to know.

He looks about ready to slink away, tail in between his legs. Alex saves him from that.

ALEX  
But man, her veins looked about ready to burst.

JOEL  
(smiles)  
Yeah.  
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

She looked about ready to re-enact  
the end of Raiders of the Lost Ark.

The walk down the hall, laughing about their little  
adventure.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM

Janice knocks on the door to Martha's classroom. She's  
cleaning up from her class that just ended.

JANICE

Hello?

MARTHA

(looks up)

Oh Janice, come in. I have the book  
right over here. I can't tell you  
how much it helped me when I was  
teaching little Amber.

She walks over to her tote-bag on the floor.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Although I must admit she's not so  
little anymore. They grow up a lot  
faster than you'd think.

(rummages in bag)

First you're teaching them  
multiplication tables, then the  
quadratic formula, then they're out  
of the house, and off to college.

She hands the book to her.

JANICE

Thanks, Martha. I'll try to get it  
back as soon as possible.

MARTHA

(chipper)

Don't mention it. Take your time,  
there's no rush.

She turns, starts erasing the board. Janice stays, trying to  
articulate what she wants to tell her.

But Martha already knows.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

But you didn't come in here for  
just a book, did you?

Janice takes a deep breath. She places her clipboard on one  
of the tables.

JANICE

Martha, I...don't think I can do this anymore.

MARTHA

Excuse me?

JANICE

Let me explain: My husband, before he died, was a Pastor. When I see a kid crying in the hallway, I'm going to minister to him. And if I can't help someone just for the sake of following the rules...

She places her clipboard on one of the tables

JANICE (CONT'D)

...then I want no part of it.

Martha gets it.

MARTHA

Nobody wants to be the bad guy.

JANICE

Excuse me?

MARTHA

You didn't do anything wrong.

JANICE

I didn't?

MARTHA

You used your own discretion, took responsibility for what you did, And he wasn't out wandering the halls, so there was no real harm done.

JANICE

Oh...

MARTHA

We need rules. They create order. But you can't let rules be so important that it gets in the way of real human connection. Kids make mistakes. So we accept them, forgive them, and instruct them. There needs to be Grace.

She turns to erase her chalkboard.



MARTHA (CONT'D)  
The secret is finding that place  
where you're forgiving, without  
being a push-over.

Janice smirks.

JANICE  
Easier said than done.

Martha looks her in the eye.

MARTHA  
(smiling)  
Oh, whoever said it was easy?

CUT TO:

INT. DOOR TO SANCTUARY

People are leaving from the class, and Nancy waits outside.  
for Dana. She exits, and sees her mother standing there.

DANA  
Mom?

NANCY  
Dana, could I speak to you for a  
moment.

It's not really a question.

DANA  
...What is it?

Nancy pulls her aside, and out of the way.

NANCY  
Dana, I just want you to know that  
everything your father and I do is  
for your own good. We don't want  
you to become corrupt like the  
world. That's why we chose to  
homeschool you, and that's also why  
we advocate courtship instead of  
dating.

Dana is cautious...

DANA  
What are you talking about, Mom?

NANCY

Don't play dumb with me, Dana. If you think you're fooling anyone with the whole Vincent Becket business, let me assure you, you're not.

DANA

What? How...

NANCY

Never mind how I know. I'm here to help. I was a teenager once; I know how dating is a slippery slope....especially at your age.

DANA

Gosh Mom, can you please just mind your own business?

She starts to stomp off. Nancy's firm arm lashes out and grabs hers.

NANCY

No. And don't you leave when I'm talking to you.

Dana stops, a little more perturbed.

NANCY (CONT'D)

It's inappropriate for you and Vincent to be anything more than friends at this point in your life.

DANA

It's not like I'm gonna get pregnant. We just like each other.

NANCY

That's where it's at now, yes. But like I said: it's a slippery slope. I'm doing this because I love you, Dana.

She pauses to let Dana consider her words.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Are we clear?

DANA

Perfectly.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Dana stomps down the hall toward Vincent. He turns to see her.

VINCENT  
Dana, I was just looking for you.  
We need to talk.

She grabs him by the arm, and pulls him toward the back.

DANA  
We sure do.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM

VINCENT  
I just realized. You're right.  
And so am I. But in different ways,  
see...

DANA  
Shut up.

She pushes him against the wall, and kisses him.

He shuts up.

It's a long and slow kiss. When she's done, he's left, mouth open.

DANA (CONT'D)  
She knows.

VINCENT  
What?

DANA  
My mom knows. I don't know how,  
but...she said "it's inappropriate  
for you and I to be anything more  
than friends."

Vincent thinks for a moment. Then...

VINCENT  
Does it matter?

Dana smiles.

DANA  
(shakes head)  
Oh no, As far as anyone ever has to  
know, we're just...really good  
friends.

He smiles too. And she goes back in for another kiss...

CUT TO:

INT. CHOIR ROOM

Alex, surrounded by other homeschoolers in choir chairs, sings a few notes from the Alto part of a very hip arrangement of "Amazing Grace".

Joel and Spencer sit a few rows behind her, sheet music in hands. They're enjoying a little down time while Spencer's mom, MRS. BECKETT is taking the Altos through their part separately.

Joel watches Alex singing. She seems almost like a different person - the tough girl with a lip ring melting away to show a quiet girl with a sweet Alto voice.

Spencer pipes up.

                  SPENCER  
So you're friends.

                  JOEL  
Friends.

                  SPENCER  
With benefits?

                  JOEL  
No.

                  SPENCER  
Okay.

Joel looks back at Alex, who is singing like an Angel

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FIVE